**READING #5 DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Consider how prisoners struggle to maintain their identity under extraordinary conditions.**

* After the forced march, the prisoners are crammed into a barracks. That night Juliek plays a fragment of a Beethoven concerto on the violin he has managed to keep the entire time he was at Auschwitz. What do you think prompts Juliek to play that evening? What does the music mean to Eliezer? To the other prisoners who hear the sounds? To Juliek?
* In this section of the book, Eliezer tells of three fathers and three sons. He speaks of Rabbi Eliahou and his son, of the father whose son killed him for a piece of bread, and finally of his own father and himself. What words does Eliezer use to describe his response to each of the first two stories? How do these stories affect the way he reacts to his father’s illness? To his father’s death?
* What does Eliezer mean when he writes that he feels free after his father’s death? Is he free of responsibility? Or is he free to go under, to drift into death?
* Eliezer later states, “Since my father’s death, nothing mattered to me anymore.” What does he mean by these words? What do they suggest about his struggle to maintain his identity?

**Think about what it means to describe one’s image as a “corpse contemplating me.”**

* In the next to last sentence in the book, Eliezer says that when he looks in a mirror after liberation, he sees a corpse contemplating him, he ends the book by stating, “The look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me.” What does that sentence mean?
* Why is it important to Eliezer to remember? To tell his story?
* How has he tried to keep you from responding to his story the way he and his father once responded to the one told by Moshe the Beadle? How successful has he been?

**Discuss why Wiesel titled his autobiographical story “*Night*”.**

* What did the word *night* mean to you before you read the book? How has the meaning of the word changed for you? How did it change for the author?
* Each night is the end of one day and the start of another. What does that suggest about the need to bear witness? To not only tell the story but also have the story be heard and acknowledged?